THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE;

OR

Literary Miscellany.

VOL. II.] *PHILADELPHIA, January* 18, 1806. [No. 3.

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For the Evening Fire-side.

THE PHILANTHROPIST: NO II.

"*Dat operam ut cum ratione insaniat.*"

He toils (of prejudice the slave)
To prove he can with reason, rave.

It was as far from my wishes as my expectations to give rise to any controversy by the sentiments expressed in my first paper; but since its publication I have received a letter addressed to the PHILANTHROPIST, which maintains a position with respect to intellectual powers, that I am neither sophist enough to approve, nor metaphysician enough to accord with. As it appears to deserve some credit for its ingenuity, and may be more congenial with the ideas of my readers than it is with my own, I shall insert it —reserving to myself the right of making at a future time such comments as I shall deem proper. To understand a subject we should certainly be willing to hear all that can be said on either side of the question, however absurd the arguments may appear. Of the communication now made, I shall content myself with saying that if *it is madness there is method in it.*

To the Philanthropist.

"In looking over your first number with a view to extract a little of the "Utile dulci" from the tears of commisseration with which it abounds, I was convinced that your philanthropy was too speculative to be extensively useful. Your sphere of action seems to be contracted by modesty within its proper limits. You deplore with a sensibility truly becoming the want of Addisons amongst us to allure us into the paths that lead to science and to virtue. And though you seem to admit that this evil might be remedied, you are quite silent as to the means by which so desirable an end could be accomplished. The opinion, that all men are alike capable of great attainments, is not generally received as orthodox, and the circumstance of its not being generally received as such, operates strongly against an increase of literary characters and the general advancement of literature. It is difficult to get rid of the false notions we imbibe in our childhood. We hear of this or that great genius, who was born to give lustre to the age in which he lived, and acknowledge him at once to be a prodigy, without examining the means by which he was exalted. Though we are not told of any having arrived at eminence in any art or science without intense application; and though it is the most rational conclusion in the world, that every man will accumulate knowledge in proportion to the time and industry he employs for that purpose: yet he who is prepossessed against himself, will treat this doctrine as absurd without attempting to illustrate, or to convince himself of its truth by one manly effort. He who feels a full confidence in his own powers and an ambition to excel; who will sacrifice every minor consideration to the improvement of his mind, will undoubtedly become a proselyte to this doctrine.

"Let any man compare his literary acquirements with those of his fellows who are futher advanced, and after examining how much time each has spent in pursuit of knowledge, he will find himself to suffer less by the comparison than he expected.

"I shall pass over many great authorities in favour of an equality of mental powers: and omit bringing forward the numerous circumstances that might be produced to strengthen those authorities; contenting myself at present with an extract from the life of Cowly, written by the HERCULES of literature. "In the window of his mother's apartment lay Spencer's Fairy Queen, in which he very early took delight to read, till by feeling the charms of verse, he became as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the accidents, which sometimes remembered, and sometimes forgotten, produce that particular designation of mind, and propensity to some certain science, or employment, commonly called genius."

"If any one will point out the man who has devoted his whole life to any particular art or science, I will undertake to shew him a master in that art or science. Before we can convey our ideas with the ease and gracefulness of an Addison, or with the force, elegance and perspicuity of a Johnson, we must be perfectly acquainted with the language in which those ideas are to be conveyed. A knowledge which very few possess. But let us not, because we are placed in situations which render the highest attainments impracticable, sink into despondence and suffer the opportunities for advancement that offer, to pass away unimproved. If therefore you will change your speculative for practical philanthropy; if you will inspire your fellow creatures with a just knowledge of their own dignity: and instead of weeping over their misfortunes, endeavour to alleviate their wretchedness by raising them to the rank they were designed to hold in the creation; by teaching them to be *men* in spite of the prejudices of education, and those long received opinions so destructive to the general welfare, you may truly be said *to deserve well of your country.*"

X.

For the Evening Fire-side.

THE HERMIT'S SOLILOQUY.

Scene—*The Sea shore.* Time—*Morning.*

Retiring o'er the murm'ring waves of ocean,
Night's curling vapours slowly steal away;
My bosom feels its wonted pure emotion,
And hails with gratitude the opening day.

From Neptune's bosom gladd'ning Phœbus rising,
O'er every breast diffuses placid joy:
While on our nature sadly moralizing,
The rising hour reflection shall employ.

This cavern form'd by Nature's plastic power,
The calm retreat that shields me from the storm;
Where oft when Silence rules the peaceful hour,
Sweet Contemplation shows her smiling form;

For sixteen years has witness'd no intruder,
To mock the simple pleasures of my cell;
Has ne'er admitted Fancy, dear deluder,
Nor fell Despondency the fiend of hell.

The wandering kid that fearless plays around me,
Nor fears destruction from my fostering hand:
Can ne'er like guilty joys with shame confound me,
Nor waken Conscience with her spectre band.

Its wanton gambols win me from reflection,
That sometimes will a pang severe impart;
Grateful it yields its innocent affection,
And had it power, would soothe each poignant smart.

Thou dear companion of my lonely rambles!
How would the world my simple love deride!
Laugh at thy frolic movements, sportive gambols,
And but repay thee with the sneer of pride.

Could Man, the tyrant, e'er of life bereave thee?
Stain with thy blood his unrelenting knife?—
With feign'd affection and delight deceive thee,
And end his trembling victim's harmless life?—

Yes! such is man!—the slave of sensual pleasure,
The sport of whim—the tenant of a day;
Regardless of the mind's substantial treasure,
Or humble Gratitude's spontaneous lay.

Lo! where yon distant mountain proudly frowning,
O'erhangs the winding vale that spreads below;
Its craggy cliffs the giant-forests crowning,
Gleam with reflection of the orient glow.

The warbling tenants of its deep recesses,
Hymn their sweet carols to the opening morn;
Aurora waves her gold-bespangled tresses,
And glitt'ring dew-drops sparkle on the thorn.

Eternal parent!—source of life and motion!
To whom all Nature pays the meed of praise!
Accept thy creature's warm, sincere devotion,
And crown with gladness his declining days.

To thee! who rul'st each quick-revolving season,
The voice of gratitude is ever due!
Teach me to merit thy bless'd gift of Reason,
And Virtue's dictates only to pursue.

Here let me live in solitude, contented,
Where Nature knows no rivalry of Art
Here let me die, alone, and unlamented,
Nor dying wound a sorrowing brothers heart.

Still, Father! deign in mercy to direct me,
To bend my heart to Virtue's sacred power;
Permit some angel-guardian to protect me,
And hover round me in my parting hour.

When glimm'ring sinks Life's fast expiring taper,
O! cheer my spirit with thy power benign!
Dispel each lowering cloud and gloomy vapour,
And fill my heart with radiance divine.

SYLVANUS.

For the Evening Fire-side,

AMERICAN LETTERS.

Messieurs Editors,

It is so seldom that criticism is called for by original works in this country, that the greatest care should be taken in the consideration of an American production, to judge with candour, lest we should commit the judgment as well as genius of the nation. In one of your late numbers you gave a critical account of the work above mentioned, which has just been published; but so partial have been your observations, that a European would at once pronounce them rather a puff than a criticism. There is a most unhappy contrast between the selections you have given as a specimen of the style of the work, and the strain of eulogy which you have adopted. It is true my perusal of this production has extended no further than the third letter, but as your observations have been principally confined to the first letters, I shall be excused a few remarks that may have a tendency to show the incorrectness of your criticism. Without professing to be an adept in the science, I take it for granted that the plain rules laid down by Blair in his lectures, are such as every work should abide by, as they are intelligible to the meanest capacity, while they are applicable to the most elegant production. It will most probably be allowed, that no one should set up for a critic, without having consulted this elementary treatise; if this be the case, can the author of the work under consideration, or of the "literary notice" in your late number, be excused for their evident neglect of the first principles of composition as laid down by Blair?

In the first extract you have made, and which in some points of view approaches nearer to the sublime than any other passage I have met with, one of the first rules of composition is violated. In the midst of the really beautiful contrast of the falls of the Rhine near Lauffen with the cataract of Niagara, and on the very verge too of a climax, the reader is confused by the occurrence of a most unhappy parenthesis.

Doctor Blair in his 11th lecture, lays down several elementary principles with regard to unity, which every author ought to keep in view. He says—"never croud into one sentence things which have so little connection that they could bear to be divided into two or three sentences. The violation of this rule never fails to hurt and displease a reader."—By way of comment on this, permit me to quote the following sentence selected by you, and with others given to the world as a fair specimen of AMERICAN LETTERS.

"To this airy brow we often walked of an evening, to see the last beams of sunshine linger upon the white peaks that overlook the farther extremity of the lake—sometimes at high noon in pensive guise we roved along the double rows of lime trees that border the junction of the Sill and the Limmat, and cast *a night of shade* upon the tomb of Gessner, the pastoral poet, who was buried at his own request in one of the thickets of the grove." Who could have anticipated at the commencement of this sentence, that ere it concluded he would be told of Gessner, that he was a pastoral poet, where he was buried, and why he was buried in that particular spot? I will say nothing of its tendency to the *bathos*; the first part of it, had it been distinct from the latter, would have ranked high as a specimen of elegant description—but redundance in style is always inconsistent with correctness, and frequently with beauty. Although my acquaintance with the work is so limited, I am informed by those who have perused it throughout that such passages as the one I have quoted, frequently present themselves. If this be the case, can this publication be deemed correct? And if it is not so are you justifiable in giving it to the world with the sanction of your approbation in the character of reviewers? I wish not to condemn it for a few trivial faults. It would be presumption in me especially with the limited knowledge I possess on the subject, to dictate to the taste of the public, but it certainly is not improper for me to say that I regret your partial comments on AMERICAN LETTERS. Had you been less profuse in your commendations, you would have been more just, and prevented the necessity of these remarks. Unqualified approbation is as bad as unqualified censure, and a production that bears such a *national title* should claim an impartial scrutiny, and undergo a strict criticism before it was suffered to go forth into the world as a standard of American taste or a specimen of our national talents.

CAITO.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
Sermon on the Mount.

When Winter's bleakest wind did blow,
And barr'd the doors with heaps of snow,
Borne by the gale, a cry of woe
Came from the Poor.

On MERCY'S ear the murmur fell,
Her gentle bosom 'gan to swell;
She thought how cold the thousands dwell
Among the Poor.

FANCY in *real* hues pourtray'd,
The time-worn Cot, the roof decay'd,
Through which the storm unpitying play'd
Upon the Poor!

The straw where pining sickness lay,
And spent in pain the dreary day;
Dragging a wretched life away,
Hopeless and Poor.

The *cheerless* hearth with skill she drew,
Chill helpless age, and infants too,
That pined for bread, were brought to view
Distressed Poor.

"O'er dying embers, see," she said,
"Their little hands, the children spread;
"Scarce shelter'd, cold, and hardly fed,
"Unmurmuring Poor.

"Ah! hear the howling of the blast!
"See how the heavens are overcast!
"Think how this *cold* night must be pass'd
"Among the Poor!

Loud roar'd the storm, she ceas'd to speak,—
From MERCY'S eye the tear full meek,
Y'sprung and glided down her cheer,
Shed for the Poor.

She call'd——and lo! a virgin band*
Was in her presence seen to stand,
Obedient to the sweet command
To help the Poor.

"Go forth"—the weeping Angel said,
"Go, and the fruits of Mercy spread,
"To raise and cheer the drooping head
"Amongst the Poor.

"The bounteous ONE that round you shines!
"Pours light on all—so GOD designs,
"His not to *worth* the gift confines,
"To Rich nor Poor.

"Alike the fatt'ning rain he sends,
"On Virtue's foes and Virtue's friends;
"Alike on *all* his dew descends,
"For *all* are Poor.

"So, when you meet the Child of woe,
"Ask not whence all his mis'ries flow;
"Sure 'tis enough for *Man* to know
"His *brother's* Poor.

"*What hast* THOU, *thou didst not receive?*"
"*Merit* no mortal may atchieve;
"Then go, and every want relieve
"Among the Poor.

"The hungry feed, the sick sustain—
"*Think what the merciful obtain!*
"Heaven will reward them well again
"Who help the Poor."

From MERCY'S lips such accents fell,
The lovely Fair obey'd them well;
Yon *dome** attests the truths I tell,
With all its Poor.

With PLENTY there the day is crown'd,
The cheerful smile is seen around,
The prattling Infant there is found,
And happy Poor.

DORCAS.

* Female Society for the relief of the Sick and Poor.

To the Editors of the Evening Fire-side.

The following sketch of the life of Saint Patrick is submitted to you for insertion. When I consider how universally the name of that great man is known, and that a very fabulous account of him is in circulation, I cannot but believe that more correct information will be acceptable to some of your readers.

COMPILER.

Saint Patrick the apostle of Ireland, and second bishop of that country, was born April 5th, A. D. 373, of a good family at Kirk-patric near Dumbarton, in what is now called Scotland, but then comprehended under the general name of Britain. His baptismal name was *Suceath*, which, in the British language, signifies, "valiant in war." On an inroad of some exiles from Ireland, he was taken prisoner and carried into that kingdom, where he was sold to Milcho, in whose service he continued six years.—In this time he made himself master of the Irish language: and at last making his escape, he returned home on board a ship. About two years after, he formed a design of converting the Irish. It appears that he was incited to this work, either in consequence of a dream or some other remarkable vision, which he had observed whilst among them. In order to qualify himself for this undertaking, he went over to the continent, where he continued thirty-five years: pursuing his studies, first under his mother's uncle, St. Martin, bishop of Tours, who ordained him deacon: and after the death of that prelate, with St. German, bishop of Auxevre, who ordained him priest. He continued under the discipline of the latter eighteen years, and from him derived much knowledge in the inspired writings. He was at length recommended by him to Celestine, Pope of Rome, who consecrated him Bishop, and gave him his most familiar name, Patricius, in token of his honourable descent, and, to give lustre to the commission with which he now charged him, to convert the Irish. Palladius had been in Ireland a year or two before, on the same design, but with little success. The Saints Kieran, Ailbe, Declan, and Ibar, were precursors both to Palladius and Patrick. But the great fame of Apostle of Ireland was reserved for our prelate, who landed at Wicklow, A. D. 441. His first convert was Sincle the eighth, in descent from Cormac king of Leinster: but not meeting with encouragement he proceeded to Dublin, and thence to Ulster, where he founded a church, (afterwards the famous Abbey of Saul in the county of Dower) remarkable for being made out of a barn, and its greatest length from north to south. After labouring seven years indefatigably in this great work, he returned to Britain, which, he, in good measure, delivered from the heresy of Pelagius and Arius. Here he engaged several eminent persons to assist him. He then visited the Isle of Man, which he converted, and a bishopric was founded there. In the year 448 he returned to the See of Armagh, which he had founded three years before. From this time till A. D. 461, he laboured with great diligence, and at length completed the conversion of the whole Island. He then went to Rome, and gave there an account of his commission: after which he once more returned to Ireland, where he spent the remainder of his days between the monasteries of Armagh and Saul, superintending and enforcing the great plan of doctrine and discipline which he had established. Here he promoted schools and established an academy: and in the 120th year of his age closed his life and ministry at Saul's Abbey, March 17th, A. D. 493, and was afterwards buried at Down in the same grave with St. Bridget and St. Columb.

His genuine works were collected and printed by Sir James Ware, 1656.

* House of Industry, Arch-Street.

For the Evening Fire-side.

FAMILIAR EPISTLES. *Letter Fourth.*

To W——— Y———.

When absence bids the feeling heart
Pant for those scenes by love endear'd;
'Tis pleasing thus our thoughts t'impart,
To friends most lov'd and most rever'd,

This cavern form'd by Nature's plastic power,
The calm retreat that shields me from the storm;
Where oft when Silence rules the peaceful hour,
Sweet Contemplation shows her smiling form;

For sixteen years has witness'd no intruder,
To mock the simple pleasures of my cell;
Has ne'er admitted Fancy, dear deluder,
Nor fell Despondency the fiend of hell.

The wandering kid that fearless plays around me,
Nor fears destruction from my fostering hand:
Can ne'er like guilty joys with shame confound me,
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The sport of whim—the tenant of a day;
Regardless of the mind's substantial treasure,
Or humble Gratitude's spontaneous lay.

Lo! where yon distant mountain proudly frowning,
O'erhangs the winding vale that spreads below;
Its craggy cliffs the giant-forests crowning,
Gleam with reflection of the orient glow.

The warbling tenants of its deep recesses,
Hymn their sweet carols to the opening morn;
Aurora waves her gold-bespangled tresses,
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Eternal parent!—source of life and motion!
To whom all Nature pays the meed of praise!
Accept thy creature's warm, sincere devotion,
And crown with gladness his declining days.

To thee! who rul'st each quick-revolving season,
The voice of gratitude is ever due!
Teach me to merit thy bless'd gift of Reason,
And Virtue's dictates only to pursue.

Here let me live in solitude, contented,
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Nor dying wound a sorrowing brothers heart.

Still, Father! deign in mercy to direct me,
To bend my heart to Virtue's sacred power;
Permit some angel-guardian to protect me,
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On MERCY's ear the murmur fell,
Her gentle bosom 'gan to swell;
She thought how cold the thousands dwell
Among the Poor.

FANCY in *real* hues pourtray'd,
The time-worn Cot, the roof decay'd,
Through which the storm unpitying play'd
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The straw where pining sickness lay,
And spent in pain the dreary day;
Dragging a wretched life away,
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The *cheerless* hearth with skill she drew,
Chill helpless age, and infants too,
That pined for bread, were brought to view
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"O'er dying embers, see," she said,
"Their little hands, the children spread;
"Scarce shelter'd, cold, and hardly fed,
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"Ah! hear the howling of the blast!
"See how the heavens are overcast!
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"Alike the fatt'ning rain he sends,
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To W——— Y———.

When absence bids the feeling heart
Pant for those scenes by love endear'd;
'Tis pleasing thus our thoughts t'impart,
To friends most lov'd and most rever'd,

The murm'ring stream, the pathless grove,
Where hermit Silence loves to dwell;
The cavern's wild recess I love,
The flowery vale, and dark'ning dell.

But soon to me their beauties fade,
No more they charm my sated eye;
The lonely walk, the grass-grown g'ade,
But prompt for home the swelling sigh.

The moss-grown rock, the chasm wide,
The moon-light ramble thro' the vale,—
The giant-mountain's hoary pride,
The fragrance of the balmy gale;

All—all can only please awhile,
While absent from the friends we love;
In vain the rural prospects smile,
In vain invites the shadowy grove.

Yet some with love of rural life,
And melancholy pleasures fired,
Have from the busy scenes of strife,
To Solitude's lone cell retir'd.

A CINCINNATUS from the field,
Of well-earn'd glory, sought his cot:
Resign'd his well-tried sword and shield,
And all the toils of war forgot.

A SCIPIO too, whose valiant arm,
Preserv'd the tott'ring towers of Rome,
Dispell'd Ambition's powerful charm,
And sought his rural humble home.

From "scepter'd care*" and gilded state,
A CHARLES† to calm retirement fled;
Secluded, met the stroke of fate,
And mingled with th' ignoble dead.

Propitious heaven! on me bestow
The joys which love and friendship yield;
From these superior pleasures flow,
Unfound amid th' ensanguin'd field.

No laurel wreathes oppress my brow,
No crown adorns my aching head;
Let kings or heroes guide the plough,
I'll envy not their lowly shed.

Let foil'd Ambition fly the court,
Or wearied Pride resign his state;
Let Pomp to solitude resort,
And cease to mingle with the great.

Let Avarice leave his golden store,
To hide his head in Nature's gloom;
Or War's tumultuous dangers o'er,
The chief his rustic toils resume.

Let pining Envy seek the shade,
And grieve to find her efforts vain;
Let baffled Malice haunt the glade,
With all the furies in her train.

I seek Content, where Friendship's smile,
Can soothe the anguish of disease;
Where social joys the time beguile,
And Heaven bestows the wish to please.

To me the watchman's hollow cry,
As loud he tells the passing hour,
Has far more music than the sigh,
Of zephyrs round yon lonely bower.

You see my friend, that though I roam
Where towering mountains rise sublime,
Still pensive Fancy wafts me home,
And spurns the tardy pace of time.

Where e'er by changeful Fortune driven,
On burning sands or rocky shore;
Still may I place my trust in heaven,
And all its wise decrees adore.

While youth and happiness are mine,
May Wisdom be my halcyon guide;
Shed on my paths her beams divine,
And o'er my wandering steps preside.

May those dear friends whom most I love,
Still feel for me affection's tie;
And through revolving seasons prove,
The happy favorites of the sky.

LYRICUS.

Aug. 29th.

SELECTED FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

SPECTRES.

(Continued.)

With respect to the evidence in favour of Spectres, if examined ever so slightly, it will be found very defective. They only appear to one person at a time; they are seen only in the night; they are visible only to ignorant, illiterate, and credulous persons, and never present themselves before men of education and learning.

That spectres only appear to one person at a time, even though there are more in company, is an objection against the credulity of their appearance quite insurmountable. How is it possible that two men of eyesight equally good, directing their eyes to the same spot, should not see so large an object as that of a man or woman at a small distance equally well? Some will tell us that a mist is cast over the eyes of one, while the view of the other is free from obstruction. But how is this to be proved? And besides what purpose would it serve? Ghosts have seldom any secrets to disclose; they might be proclaimed to a multitude with as much propriety as confined to one person. Shall we be told, that the spectre has the power of becoming visible to some, and of remaining invisible to others? This cannot be allowed without adopting opinions destructive to revealed religion; for it would be a miracle; and we cannot be persuaded, without evidence, that God would empower any inferior being to controul at pleasure the wise laws which he has ordained for governing the world. To him who is of a different opinion, we would recommend, Farmer on Miracles; a book in which this question is fully examined.

Spectres appear only in the night. But why should they shun the light of the sun? Those mischievous ghosts that Granville mentions might indeed have some reason to choose midnight for the execution of their pranks, as they would be more easily detected in open day.—Such was the roguish drummer that haunted Mr. Mompesson's house, who beat his drum all night, threw the old gentlewoman's clothes about the room, hid her bible in the ashes, plucked the clothes off the bed, and amused himself with tossing about Mr. Mompesson's shoes.—But why should a grave serious ghost appear at midnight? Might it not deliver its message with as much ease and more success in the day time? In the day time it would not excite much fear: it would be listened to therefore with more attention: and did it choose to exhibit itself before a number of witnesses, its grievances would be more speedily redressed, because more persons would interest themselves in seeing justice done to the injured ghost.

Spectres not only choose the most improper time, but the most improper persons. To render the testimony of any person credible, he must not only be a man of veracity, but he must have a sufficient ability to judge of the subject to which he is to bear witness. It is not on the evidence of an ignorant illiterate person, who has more fancy and fear than judgment, that we are to rest our belief of what is supernatural. It is also worthy of remark, that we have never heard of a ghost appearing to any person who did not previously believe their existence. A man must be prejudiced in favour of this opinion, or he will never see a ghost. But sensible men know, that he who has been accustomed to hear frightful stories of ghosts and apparitions gliding through a church-yard, or haunting some particular place, can scarcely pass through a church-yard or haunted spot without conjuring up in his imagination the hideous phantoms which he has been accustomed to associate with such places. Is it strange, then, that an ignorant man, with a mind uncultivated and uninformed, with all the prejudice of the nursery about him, should imagine he sees ghosts in those places where he believes they hover, especially in the dead hour of midnight, when, with the slightest aid of the imagination, a cow may be turned into a monstrous phantom, and the reflection

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* GRAY.
† CHARLES V. of Spain.

of the beams of the moon from a little water be converted into a ghost with a winding sheet? But why should apparitions shun men of understanding and learning? Why should learning be formidable to them?* It was not so with the celestial messengers mentioned in the scriptures: they appeared to the patriarchs and prophets; and the miracles they recorded were performed in the most public places, before the eyes of Rabbins, of Scribes, and Pharisees. Indeed this circumstance is sufficient to destroy the evidence of spectres. They have never been seen by any but men of weak or distempered minds, or by men who have previously believed in them.

Having now considered the evidence on which the belief of Spectres rests, we will endeavour to give some account of the foundation of it. To trace an opinion which has prevailed so generally in the world to its source, is a labour not unworthy of the philosopher, even though the opinion be false. It is always gratifying to detect the causes of error: it is no less useful; for in order to refute error, it is often sufficient to point out the sources from which it has sprung. To reach the origin of the belief of spectres is not more difficult than to account for idolatry or polytheism. In the infant state of the intellectual powers every thing is considered as possessing life and intelligence. The child beats the stool over which he has fallen with the same passion that he would treat his companion: the young girl talks to her doll as if it understood her: the savages ascribe every change which they observe on the face of nature to the action of some animated being. As knowledge advances, they single out those beings which seem to produce the most striking effects; arrange them in some kind of order, and divide the government of the world among them. Unable, at the same time, to conceive any notion of a pure spirit, they imagine those divinities are corporeal beings. This is the foundation of idolatry. The belief of spectres is but another step. That these animated corporeal beings, to whom they address their prayers, and who preside over the world, should on particular occasions display themselves to the human eye, is what they must be previously disposed to expect. Hence the numberless appearances of the heathen gods, of the Persian and Mahometan genii. The belief of ghosts may be easily deduced from the opinions entertained respecting a future state.—These opinions are founded on that essential doctrine of natural religion, that there is another world in which men shall exist when death has removed them hence.—This doctrine has been universally received, both by savage and civilized nations; but, as might be expected, men have formed very different sentiments concerning the nature of a future state of the situation and employment of departed spirits, according to the degree of knowledge which they possessed.—But the general opinion in ancient and rude nations was, that departed spirits retained the same external appearance, the same passions and principles as before. Nothing therefore was more natural than the opinion, that they might occasionally revisit this world, from an anxious desire to alleviate the sufferings of those beloved friends and relations whom they had left behind them, or to communicate from the unseen world, what might be important to their welfare. Upon such an errand did Creusa appear to Æneas. The apparition of the ghosts of murderers is easily explained upon the same general principles. The remorse and horror of mind which the murderer feels are supposed to haunt him in the other world, and to render his situation there intolerable (especially if the murderer was never detected and punished,) till he return and give information against himself. In this way, then, we think it highly probable the belief of spectres has originated. But many other causes concur to confirm and propagate this belief. These are, imperfect vision united with fear, dreams, opium, diseases, drunkenness, and artifice.

1st. Indistinct vision is one source of apparitions, especially when the mind is under the influence of fear. It is well known, that the sense of seeing conveys no idea of distance till improved by experience and observation.

In the day time we seldom commit mistakes, because we know the object at which we look; but at night, when we see objects obscurely, and know not what they are, we have no distinct idea either of their distances or of their magnitude. We may mistake a bush that is near us for a tree at a distance; or if the imagination be under the influence of fear, it will easily convert it into a gigantic figure. "It is generally asserted (says Buffon) that these figures exist only in the imagination: yet they may have a real existence in the eye; for whenever we have no other mode of judging of an unknown object but by the angle it forms in the eye, its magnitude will uniformly increase in proportion to its propinquity. If it appears, when at the distance of twenty or thirty paces, to be only a few feet high, its height, when within two or three feet of the eye, will be many fathoms. An object of this kind must naturally excite terror and astonishment in the spectator, till he approaches and recognizes it by actual feeling: for the moment a man knows an object, the gigantic appearance it assumed on the eye instantly diminishes, and its apparent magnitude is reduced to its real dimensions. But if, instead of approaching such an object, the spectator flies from it, he can have no other idea of it but from the image which it formed in his eye: and, in this case, he may affirm with truth that he saw an object terrible in its aspect, and enormous in its size.—Thus the notions concerning spectres is founded in nature, and depend not, as some philosophers affirm, upon the imagination alone."

In addition to these observations of Buffon, we may take notice, that objects are always magnified in a fog: so that when a fog happens in the night, objects may be magnified to an enormous size: but at any rate whether there be fog in the night or not, there is not such a great

* The celebrated historian De Thou had a very singular adventure at Saumer, in the year 1598.—One night, having retired to rest very much fatigued, while he was enjoying a sound sleep, he felt a very extraordinary weight upon his feet, which having made him turn suddenly, fell down and awakened him. At first he imagined that it had been only a dream, but hearing soon after some noise in his chamber, he drew aside the curtains, and saw, by help of the moon, which at that time shone very bright, a large white figure walking up and down, and at the same time observed upon a chair some rags, which he thought belonged to thieves, who had come to rob him. The figure then approaching his bed, he had the courage to ask it what it was.—"I am (said it) the Queen of Heaven." Had such a figure appeared to any credulous ignorant man in the dead of night and made such a speech, would he not have trembled with fear, and have frightened the whole neighbourhood with a marvellous description of it? But De Thou had too much understanding to be so imposed upon. Upon hearing the words which dropped from the figure, he immediately concluded that it was some mad woman, got up, called his servants, and ordered them to turn her out of doors; after which he returned to bed and fell asleep. Next morning he found that he had not been deceived in his conjecture, and that having forgot to shut his door, this female figure had escaped from her keepers, and entered his apartment. The brave Schomberg, to whom De Thou related this adventure some days after, confessed that in such a case he would not have shewn so much courage. The King also, who was informed of it by Schomberg, made the same acknowledgment.

analogy between darkness and a fog, that if the latter deceive us with respect to the size of objects, the former will also deceive us. The writer of this article was passing the Frith of Forth at Queensferry, near Edinburgh, one morning which was extremely foggy. Though the water be only two miles broad, the boat did not get within sight of the southern shore till it approached very near it. He then saw to his great surprise a large perpendicular rock, where he knew the shore was low and almost flat. As the boat advanced a little nearer, the rocks seem to split perpendicularly into portions, which separated at a little distance from one another. He next saw these perpendicular divisions move; and upon approaching a little nearer found it was a number of people standing on the beach, waiting the arrival of the ferry-boat.

2d. Dreams are another fertile source of apparitions. It is well known to every person, that while the mind is under the influence of a dream, it considers it as much a reality as it does any particular action while awake. Now if a person of a weak superstitious mind should have a very lively dream, which interests his passions, particularly the passion of fear, it may make so deep an impression, that he may be firmly convinced that he has actually seen with his eyes what has only passed before his imagination.

We shall here tell a story, by way of illustration, which we have received on unquestionable authority. An East Indian captain had an honest faithful servant named *John*, for whom he had a great regard.

John died, if we recollect right, on a voyage from England to the East Indies during a French war. As the ship approached the place of its destination the captain had a dream, in which John appeared to him, and earnestly besought him not to sail to the port for which he was bound, as it was in the hands of the French.

The captain, though not addicted to superstition, thought it prudent to follow this admonition: and after landing at a different port, he was informed that the place to which he had intended to steer, was, according to the information of the dream, captured by the French. On the voyage home, the captain had a second dream, in which John again appeared to him, and gave him notice that he should soon die, and that the ship should be taken in the mouth of the channel by the French. Next morning the captain called his first mate, told him his dream, which he believed was prophetic, and delivered his papers, that he might take proper care of them after his decease.

Every thing happened exactly as the dream had foretold, the captain died, and the vessel was taken by a French man of war in the mouth of the channel. This dream, wonderful as it appears, is easily explained. In the voyage out to India, nothing was more natural than that the captain should sometimes be thinking, that amidst the various chances of war, the port to which he was bound might be taken; perhaps it was a place of consequence, which the French might be eager to posses. The captain being accustomed to revolve these thoughts in the day time, they would naturally return at night; the regret which he felt for the loss of a faithful servant might mingle with his apprehensions, and thus produce the dream. Perhaps the advice was such as John would have given had he been alive. It is equally easy to explain the cause of the dream in the passage home. The captain, we are told, was very ill, and thought himself dying, at the very time he had the second dream, and therefore did not expect to reach England.—This part of the dream, then, was only his own thoughts, delivered by his servant. As to the part that his ship should be taken in the mouth of the Channel, it may be thought unaccountable how the very place should be foreseen. But we must recollect, that the mouth of the Channel, being over against the coast of France, was by far the most dangerous place in the whole passage; and that, therefore, the captain had more reason to be afraid of losing his ship there than in any other place. The use which we mean to make of this story is this; had the captain been a man of a weak mind, he would certainly have considered the dream as a reality, and believed that instead of having dreamed of the things on which his imagination had dwelled, he had actually seen his servant return from the dead, and heard him deliver the message. But, on the other hand, the captain, though he believed the dream was prophetic, mentioned it without any signs of fear; and no man of courage and reflection ever sees an apparition.

This sight is reserved for the weak, the timid and superstitious. Of this many instances might be mentioned.

(To be continued.)

No life pleasing to God that is not useful to man.—An Eastern tale.

It pleased our mighty sovereign Abbas Carascan, from whom the kings of the earth derive honour and dominion, to set Mirza his servant over the province of Tauris. In the hand of Mirza, the balance of distribution was suspended with impartiality; and under his administration the weak were protected, the learned received honour, and the diligent became rich: Mirza, therefore, was beheld by every eye with complacency, and every tongue pronounced blessings upon his head. But it was observed that he derived no joy from the benefits which he diffused: he became pensive and melancholy; he spent his leisure in solitude; in his palace he sat motionless upon a sofa; and when he went out, his walk was slow, and his eyes were fixed upon the ground: he applied to the business of state with reluctance; and resolved to relinquish the toil of government, of which he could no longer enjoy the reward.

He therefore obtained permission to approach the throne of our sovereign; and being asked what was his request he made this reply: "May the Lord of the world forgive the slave whom he has honoured, if Mirza presume again to lay the bounty of Abbas at his feet. Thou hast given me the dominion of a country fruitful as the gardens of Damascus, and a city, glorious above all others, except that only which which reflects the splendour of thy presence. But the longest life is a period scarce sufficient to prepare for death: all other business is vain and trivial, as the toil of emmets in the path of the traveller, under whose foot they perish forever; and all enjoyment is unsubstantial and evanescent, as the colours of the bow that appear in the interval of a storm. Suffer me, therefore, to prepare for the approach of eternity; let me give up my soul to meditation: let solitude and silence acquaint me with the mysteries of devotion; let me forget the world, and by the world be forgotten, till the moment arrives in which the veil of eternity shall fall, and I shall be found at the bar of the Almighty." Mirza then bowed himself to the earth, and stood silent.

By the command of Abbas it is recorded, that at these words he trembled upon that throne, at the footstool of which the world pays homage: he looked round upon his nobles; but every countenance

was pale, and every eye was upon the earth. No man opened his mouth; and the king first broke silence, after it had continued near an hour.

"Mirza, terror and doubt have come upon me. I am alarmed, as a man who suddenly perceives that he is near the brink of a precipice, and is urged forward by an irresistible force: but yet I know not, whether my danger is a reality or a dream. I am as thou art a reptile of the earth: my life is a moment, and eternity, in which days and years and ages are nothing, eternity is before me, for which I also should prepare: but by whom then must the faithful be governed? by those only who have no fear of judgment? by those only whose life is brutal, because, like brutes, they do not consider that they shall die? Or who, indeed, are the faithful? are the busy multitudes that crowd the city, in a state of perdition? and is the cell of the dervise alone the gate of paradise? To all, the life of a dervise is not possible: to all, therefore, it cannot be a duty. Depart to the house which has in this city been prepared for thy residence: I will meditate the reason of thy request; and may he who illuminates the mind of the humble, enable me to determine with wisdom."

Mirza departed, and on the third day, having received no command, he again requested an audience, and it was granted. When he entered the royal presence, his countenance appeared more cheerful; he drew a letter from his bosom, and having kissed it, he presented it with his right hand. "My Lord," said he, "I have learned by this letter, which I received from Cosrou the Iman, who now stands before thee, in what manner life may be best improved. I am enabled to look back with pleasure, and forward with hope; and I shall now rejoice still to be the shadow of thy power at Tauris, and to keep those honours which I so lately wished to resign." The king, who had listened to Mirza with a mixture of surprize and curiosity, immediately gave the letter to Cosrou, and commanded that it should be read. The eyes of the court were at once turned upon the hoary sage, whose countenance was suffused with an honest blush; and it was not without some hesitation that he read these words:

"To Mirza, who the wisdom of Abbas our mighty Lord has honoured with dominion, be everlasting health! When I heard thy purpose to withdraw the blessing of thy government from the thousands of Tauris, my heart was wounded with the arrow of affliction, and my eyes became dim with sorrow. But who shall speak before the king when he is troubled; and who shall boast of knowledge, when he is distressed by doubt? To thee I will relate the events of my youth, which thou hast renewed before me; and those truths which they taught me, may the prophet multiply to thee.

"Under the instruction of the physician Aluzar, I obtained an early knowledge of his art. To those who were smitten with disease I could administer plants, which the sun has impregnated with the spirit of health. But the scenes of pain, languor, and mortality which were perpetually rising before me, made me often tremble for myself. I saw the grave open at my feet: I determined, therefore, to contemplate only the regions beyond it, and to despise every acquisition which I could not keep. I conceived an opinion, that as there was no merit but in voluntary poverty, and silent meditation, those who desired money were not proper objects of bounty, and that by all who were proper objects of bounty, money was despised. I therefore buried mine in the earth; and renouncing society, I wandered into a wild and sequestered part of the country; my dwelling was a cave by the side of a hill, I drank the running water from the spring, and eat such fruits and herbs as I could find. To increase the austerity of my life, I frequently watched all night, sitting at the entrance of the cave, with my face to the east, resigning myself to the secret influences of the prophet, and expecting illuminations from above. One morning, after my nocturnal vigil, just as I perceived the horizon glow at the approach of the sun, the power of sleep became irresistible, and I sunk under it. I imagined myself still sitting at the entrance of my cell; that the dawn encreased; and that as I looked earnestly for the first beam of day, a dark spot appeared to intercept it. I perceived that it was in motion; it encreased in size as it drew near, and at length I discovered it to be an eagle. I still kept my eye fixed stedfastly upon it, and saw it alight at a small distance, where I now descried a fox, whose two fore-legs appeared to be broken. Before this fox the eagle laid part of a kid, which she had brought in her talons, and then disappeared. When I awaked, I laid my forehead upon the ground, and blessed the prophet for the instruction of the morning. I reviewed my dream, and said thus to myself: Cosrou, thou hast done well to renounce the tumult, the business, and the vanities of life; but thou hast as yet only done it in part: thou art still every day busied in the search of food; thy mind is not wholly at rest, neither is thy trust in Providence complete. What art thou taught by this vision? If thou hast seen an eagle commissioned by Heaven to feed a fox that is lame, shall not the hand of Heaven also supply thee with food; when that which prevents thee from procuring it for thyself is not necessity, but devotion? I was now so confident of a miraculous supply, that I neglected to walk out for my repast, which, after the first day, I expected with an impatience that left me little power of attending to any other object: this impatience, however, I laboured to suppress, and persisted in my resolution; but my eyes at length began to fail me, and my knees smote each other; I threw myself backward, and hoped my weakness would soon encrease to insensibility. But I was soon rouzed by the voice of an invisible being, who pronounced these words: "Cosrou, I am the angel who, by the command of the Almighty, have registered the thoughts of thy heart, which I am now commissioned to reprove. While thou wast attempting to become wise above that which is revealed, thy folly has perverted the instruction which was vouchsafed thee. Art thou disabled as the fox? hast thou not rather the powers of the eagle? Arise, let the eagle be the object of thy emulation. To pain and sickness be thou again the messenger of ease and health. Virtue is not rest, but action. If thou dost good to man, as an evidence of thy love to God, thy virtue will be exalted from moral to divine; and that happiness which is the pledge of Paradise, will be thy reward upon earth.

"At these words I was not less astonished than if a mountain had been overturned at my feet; I humbled myself in the dust; I returned to the city; I dug up my treasure; I was liberal, yet I became rich. My skill in restoring health to the body, gave me frequent opportunities of curing the diseases of the soul. I put on the sacred vestments; I grew eminent beyond my merit; and it was the pleasure of the king that I should stand before him. Now, therefore, be not offended; I boast of no knowledge that I have not received; as the hands of

the desert drink up the drops of rain, or the dew of the morning; so do I also, who am but dust, imbibe the instructions of the prophet. Believe then, that it is he who tells thee, all knowledge is prophane, which terminates in thyself; and by a life wasted in speculation, little even of this can be gained. When the gates of Paradise are thrown before thee, thy mind shall be irradiated in a moment: here thou canst little more than pile error upon error; there thou shalt build truth upon truth. Wait, therefore, for the glorious vision; and in the mean time emulate the eagle. Much is in thy power; and therefore much is expected of thee. Though the Almighty only can give virtue, yet, as a prince, thou mayest stimulate those to beneficence, who act from no higher motive than immediate interest: thou canst not produce the principle, but mayest enforce the practice. The relief of the poor is equal, whether they receive it from ostentation or charity; and the effect of example is the same, whether it be intended to obtain the favour of God or man. Let thy virtue be thus diffused; and if thou believest with reverence, thou shalt be accepted above. Farewell. May the smile of him who resides in the Heaven of Heavens, be upon thee! and against thy name, in the volume of his will, may happiness be written!"

The king, whose doubts, like those of Mirza, were now removed, looked up with a smile that communicated the joy of his mind. He dismissed the prince to his government; and commanded these events to be recorded, to the end that posterity may know, "that no life is pleasing to God, but that which is useful to mankind."

[*Adventurer.*]

SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE.

Foreign and Domestic.

The following interesting intelligence was communicated in a letter from a gentleman of respectability at Norfolk, dated the 4th instant:—"A vessel in 34 days from Burdeaux has just arrived, and brings the unpleasant intelligence of Bonaparte's army having, on the 16th November, been before Vienna—that the next day he was to make his formal entry into that city. This news is communicated this instant by Mr. Maurice, who is just come from the vessel, after seeing the papers, and may be relied on.

We are indebted to Mr. Ezra Davis, of this town, for the following highly important and very agreeable information. Mr. Davis left the Vineyard on Wednesday evening the 1st instant, and says, that all our differences with the Spanish Government were amicably settled to Mr. Pinckney's entire satisfaction. This most pleasing intelligence was brought to the Vineyard by the ship Resolution, Capt. Daniel Rogers, of Glouceſter, Cape Ann, who left Lisbon the 20th of November last, and arrived at the Vineyard after a passage of 40 days. Mr. Davis took the precaution to make his minutes from the verbal communication of the captain at the moment of his arrival.—Capt. Rogers frequently saw Mr. Pinckney at Lisbon, who had sailed five days before Capt. R. left that place, in a Swedish vessel bound for Charleston, South Carolina. Mr. Pinckney told Capt. R. that the Spanish Court had agreed to pay for all ships, cargoes and freights, according to their late stipulations with the American Government. It is understood also, that all our territorial disputes with Spain are happily settled; and that the general aspect of our diplomatic concerns in that quarter, was auspicious and flattering in a high degree. The vessel was bound to Glouceſter, and the news cannot, therefore, be received from her directly, for some days.

Capt. Rogers has dispatches on board for the administration, which no doubt will be sent forward by express as soon as they arrive at Cape Ann. We have taken the utmost pains to ascertain the above mentioned particulars, and have no doubt of their being substantially correct.

[*Boston Democrat.*

The following interesting Article is copied from the New York Mercantile Advertiser of the 13th inst.

The most pleasing intelligence we can offer is the report that our differences with Great Britain, respecting the late captures of our vessels, are adjusted, through the interference of the English merchants, who remonstrated with the government. Mr. Parish, a passenger in the ship Bristol Packet, from London, is said to be the bearer of dispatches on this subject from Mr. Monroe to the Secretary of State.

From accounts published in the French bulletins, it appears that the meeting and defeating their enemy were the same. The modern Cæsar may, in immitation of the ancient, say, veni, vidi, vici! The Austrian cabinet appears no less confounded, than the armies are dismayed. The Emperor of Austria abandoned his capital at the approach of the French, and retired to Bohemia. We cannot in this place resist the insertion of an anecdote of Bonaparte, well known in the diplomatic circles of Paris, and related to us by a gentleman from France. Some time last summer, Bonaparte in speaking to the Austrian minister observed. "Your master wants war, does he? tell him from me, that if he obliges me to war, I will sleep in his bed before Christmas." That he will perform his promise, the present details sufficiently prove.

With England France appears determined to prosecute the war with vigour.—Already has she commenced the formation of another camp at Bologne, to which place a part of the imperial guards had actually arrived. Bonaparte, it is said, as he passed to the Rhine, observed, that he would spend his Christmas in Vienna, and Easter in London, while we admit that he is punctual in most of his promises, we venture to predict that he will not keep this.

The ordinary revenue of the United States for 1806, is estimated at 12,500,000, the Mediterranean Fund, arrears of internal duties, direct tax, &c. will produce 1,000,000, the specie in the treasury 4,575,000—Making 18,075,000, at the service of government for 1806. The permanent expenses are estimated at 11,150,000: the extraordinary demands for 1806, amount to 4,000,000—making together 15,150,000. Leaving 2,625,000 dollars unappropriated.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Veritatus is too prolix for insertion.

T.'s remarks on Meteorology in our next.

"*The sect of Socians in Persia*" is designed for a future number.

The communications of Prospectus do not possess that degree of poetic merit which entitles selections to a place in this Miscellany.

Lines addressed "To Hope—by a Lady," came to hand too late for insertion in the present number.

Dominic Bearwell will please to exercise his patience until next week, when he will know the fate of his communication.

Layman! we think thou hast discovered *thy proper calling*, and hope that thou wilt *therein abide*.

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